



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Issued by the Department of Transportation  
on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2003

Essential air service at

**WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS**

under 49 U.S.C. 41731 *et seq.*

**Served: February 11, 2003**

**Docket OST-03-14333**

**ORDER ALLOWING SUSPENSION OF SERVICE  
AND GRANTING EXEMPTION REQUEST**

**Background**

On January 22, 2003, Allegheny Airlines, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express, filed a 90-day notice of intent to suspend its scheduled service at Worcester, Massachusetts, as of April 22, 2003, and a request for an exemption allowing it to suspend service on shorter notice. Allegheny is the only carrier providing scheduled service at Worcester, and currently operates three nonstop round trips each weekday and five each weekend to Philadelphia with 37-seat Dash-8 aircraft.<sup>1</sup>

**Essential Air Service Determination**

Worcester's essential air service determination, as last established by Order 98-11-22, November 24, 1998, required a minimum of two nonstop or one-stop round trips a day, offering at least 67 seats in each direction, to any large or medium hub

**Community Response**

By letter dated February 3, 2003, the City Manager of Worcester states that the community does not object to Allegheny's suspension of service on February 23. The City Manager states that the community is distressed at the prospect of losing Allegheny's service, but recognizes the current financial difficulties of the industry generally and of US Airways particularly, and is therefore willing to allow Allegheny to suspend service on less than 90 days' notice. The community hopes that service will be restored once US Airways financial situation improves.

**Decision**

We will allow Allegheny to suspend service at Worcester as of February 23, since the community is amenable to Allegheny's early suspension of service on that date. We could not require Allegheny to maintain service at Worcester beyond the end of the 90-day notice period in any event. We are statutorily prohibited from paying subsidy to support essential air service at communities that do not meet certain eligibility criteria, including communities located within 70

<sup>1</sup> See the Appendix for a map.

highway miles of a large or medium hub. Worcester is located just 38 miles from Boston, a large hub, 49 miles from Providence, a medium hub, and 63 miles from Hartford/Springfield, another medium hub.<sup>2</sup> Because we are prohibited from paying subsidy for Allegheny's service at Worcester, we have no authority to require the carrier to continue that service.<sup>3</sup>

Before Allegheny suspends service, however, we expect it to contact all passengers who hold reservations for flights that will be suspended, to inform them of the suspension, and to assist them in arranging alternate transportation.

This order is issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.56a(f).

**ACCORDINGLY,**

1. We grant the request of Allegheny Airlines, Inc., d/b/a US Airways Express, for an exemption for the 90-day notice period required by 49 U.S.C. 41734(a) to the extent necessary to allow it to suspend service at Worcester, Massachusetts, as of February 23, 2003;
2. This docket will remain open until further order of the Department; and
3. We will serve copies of this order on the mayor and airport manager of Worcester, Massachusetts, and Allegheny Airlines, Inc. d/b/a US Airways Express.

By:

**READ C. VAN DE WATER**  
Assistant Secretary for Aviation  
and International Affairs

(SEAL)

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on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>*

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<sup>2</sup> As reported by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics in its annual publication, *Airport Activity Statistics of Certificated Route Carriers*. Hub classifications are based on each hub's enplanements as a percentage of all U.S. enplanements. A large hub accounts for at least 1.00 percent, a medium hub for at least 0.25 but less than 1.00 percent, and a small hub for at least 0.05 but less than 0.25 percent. During calendar year 2001, the most recent year for which data are available, Boston accounted for 1.68 percent, Providence for 0.44 percent, and Hartford/Springfield for 0.56 percent of all U.S. enplanements.

<sup>3</sup> See Order 97-12-2, December 1, 1997, which allowed Continental Express, Inc., to suspend service between Worcester and Newark, as well as Order 98-11-22, which allowed Atlantic Coast Airlines, Inc., to suspend service between Worcester and Washington Dulles International Airport.

# MAP

